

Private project enhances street

A resident's firm pays to remove utility poles in King William area.

BY MICHELLE MONDO
EXPRESS-NEWS STAFF WRITER

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A King William resident who paid for a utility pole conversion project at one intersection is hoping the pilot program will spur action from public and private sources to help fund future conversion projects throughout the historic area.

Roy Pachecano, president of Portico Residential and Portico Real Estate Investments, both New York City-based companies

"A public-private partnership, I think that's the wave of the future."

ROY PACHECANO
King William resident

Pachecano said AT&T, CPS Energy and Time Warner Cable removed an estimated 10-14 utility poles at the corner of King William and East Johnson Street and buried the linear cables underground.

Pachecano's company paid for all of the expenses totaling \$50,000, he said.

"The conversion is an attempt to go back to the neighborhood it once was," Pachecano said.

Pachecano and the King William Association— of which he is a member — worked with the three companies, planning the project for 18 months. Pachecano said he and the association volunteers worked with various city departments.

King William Association President Kit Walker had no comment.

In the end, Portico Residential paid for the three companies to take down the poles and lines each owned at the intersection.

AT&T removed four poles and buried 550 feet of cable, according to its spokeswoman. CPS Energy removed four utility poles, took down 250 feet of overhead electric lines, rerouted another 100 feet of electric line and installed underground electric service to two homes, according to its spokesman. Time Warner Cable did not return calls for information by press time.

Before and after photos show the now-unobstructed view at the corner, which is exactly how Pachecano said the entire district should look.

He said he hopes private and

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Utility conversion program draws praise

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public entities will come forward to help fund future projects. One future project is being brought before the Historic Design and Review Commission at 3 p.m. today. Pachecano said getting permits for the project is the easy part. Planning and implementing is much more difficult.

AT&T spokeswoman April Borlinghaus said she was unsure what stand the company would take on funding the removal of its utility poles and lines. In an e-mail, Borlinghaus said she did not believe Pachecano had approached the company about future funding.

CPS Energy spokesman Bob McCullough said the utility company would work with private residents like Pachecano who want to alter something about their utilities. But any larger projects and funding decisions would come from the city.

"If it was workable in their view and worth pursuing, they would be the ones to get in touch with us," McCullough said.

Pachecano said he has seen private corporations pay for projects like this before, including one he worked on in his neighborhood in New York City. Pachecano has since moved to King William with his wife and two children.

Earlier this year, Pachecano

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ROY PACHECANO

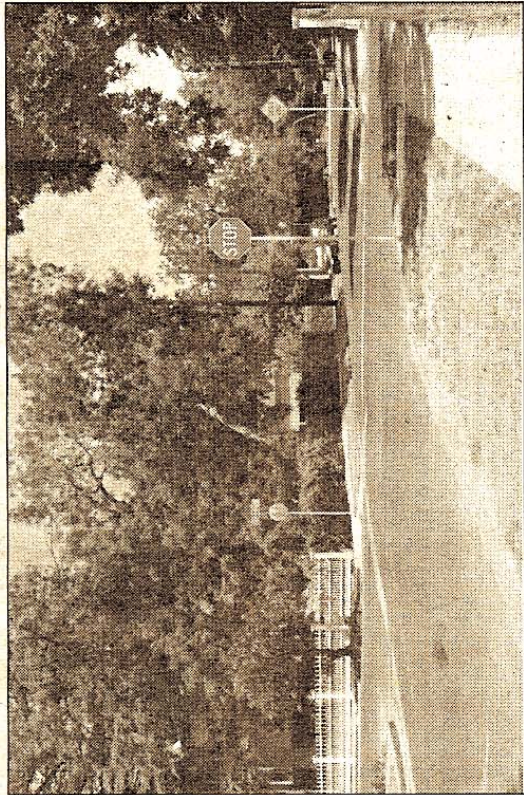
King William resident

met with Larry Zinn, Mayor Phil Hardberger's chief of staff, and discussed the process for utility conversion.

The mayor's spokesman J.J. Saulino said the city is always interested in utility conversion, especially if neighborhood associations or residents have the resources to fund the projects. However, in Districts 2 and 9, two utility conversion projects were completed using special CPS Energy funds. Saulino said the projects were spurred by the district council representatives.

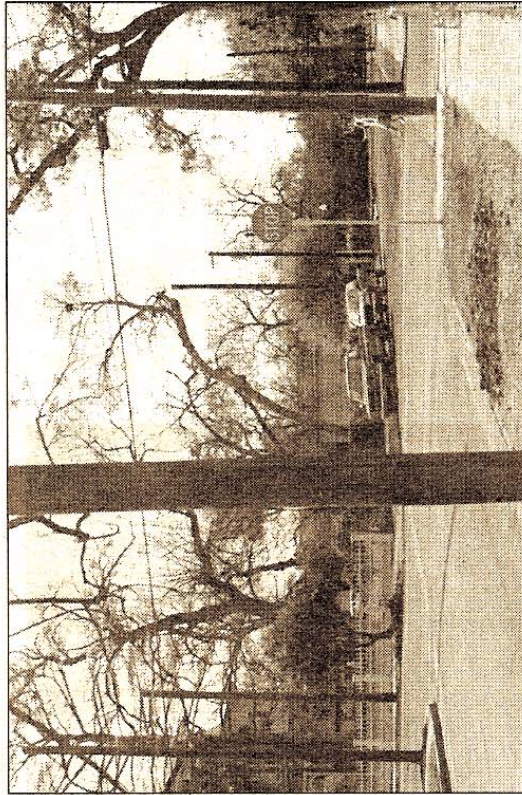
Pachecano hopes residents in King William and the city can work together the same way.

"We hope that pilot program, which was funded privately will spur that (public-private partnership)," Pachecano said. "There's a misconception out there that it can't be done, (that there is) too much bureaucratic red tape. A public-private partnership, I think that's the wave of the future."



COURTESY PHOTOS

AFTER: Utility poles and aerial cables have been removed along East Johnson Street in the King William District.



BEFORE: This is a view of the intersection before the poles and aerial cables were removed in a privately funded utility conversion project.

mmondo@express-news.net